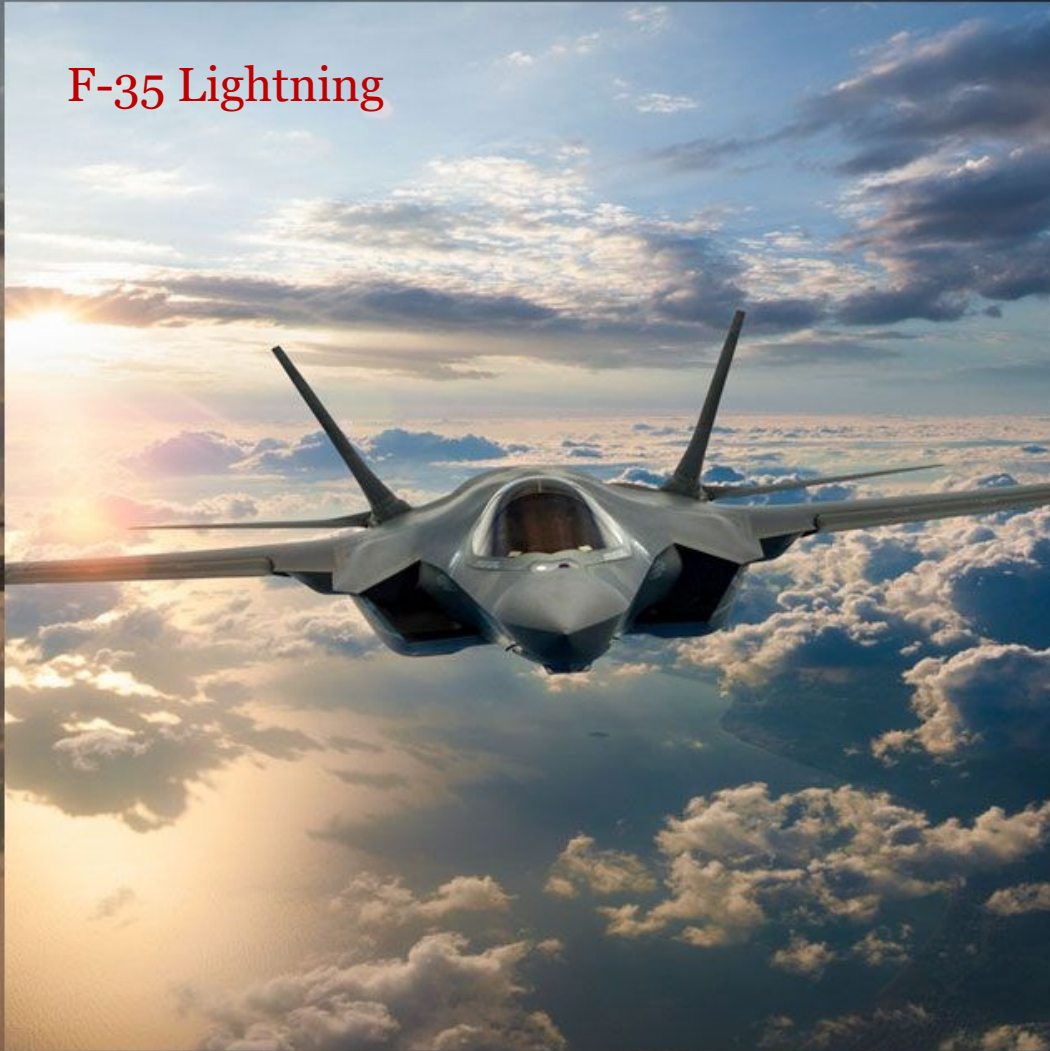


Fort Y rk News

Fort York Branch 165 Royal Canadian Legion

F-35 Lightning



Delivery to Canada 2026?

February  2024

Christmas Dinner 2023 Granite Club



Our Much Valued Veterans







This year marks 2 significant peacekeeping anniversaries. It is the 60th anniversary of Canada's involvement in Cyprus and it is the 50th anniversary of the 1974 Conflict in Cyprus, where Canadians engaged in combat.

Walter Holmes (Maj Gen Ret'd) has asked if I could assist in getting the word out. Please consider distributing the message through your respective commands.

Did you serve in CYPRUS under OP Snowgoose?

Avez-vous servi à CHYPRE sous OP Snowgoose ?

2024 is the 60th anniversary of Canadian involvement on the island of Cyprus, and the 50th anniversary of the 74 conflict.

If you did serve in Cyprus, you may be interested in taking a trip down memory lane by joining us for a **November 2024** reunion in Cyprus. The reunion is open to all CAF Veterans who served under the United Nations banner in Cyprus **and family members** of those who served. The linked brochure provides the background to the tour and all the detail that you need to make a decision on participation.

Here is the link to **the Brochure:**
[2024-11-CyprusLoResV10.pdf](#)

The tour enjoys the full support of Global Affairs Canada, the Department of National Defence and Veterans Affairs Canada and it promises to be the trip of a lifetime. Registration through our travel

agents, Special Travel International, is open with an early sell out of the 200 available seats anticipated. 60 have signed up as of 10 Jan. We anticipate having to return some rooms to the Hilton in Nicosia in the next few months. Please make your reservations early! Here is the link to the Special Travel International **Signup Form:**

<https://sticanada.com/cyprus24>

Update on Peter Moon

Unfortunately Peter had a fall recently but he is recovering well in Bridgepoint Hospital. I spent a month there after being hospitalized for three months a few years ago and I can tell you that Peter is in a first-class facility with meals prepared on-site!

From Fred McCague:

"Peter is doing very well and everything is working well for

him. As I was walking down the hall towards his room (masked) he was outside the room talking to a PSW and called down the hall , "You must be looking for Moon!" As I got closer and removed the mask he recognized me

and we had a good chuckle over the telephone conversation yesterday. We went into the room and chatted for over an hour.



Terry Sleightholm

Get better soon, Peter!

We miss you.

Our Newest Members 2024



Ethel Wilcott-Feldt
Tpr Harry Hamper Keleshian
Wen Hao Li
HCol Kevin R.E. McCormick
Arlene Miles
Richard Oko
Sean Paul Pretty
Bradley Wood

Welcome to
Fort York Branch 165

Navy News



Even with personnel shortages, Vice-Admiral Angus Topshee is “confident” in the Royal Canadian Navy’s ability to meet its commitments.

“The biggest challenge we face right now is personnel. So, we’re about 20 per cent short overall in the Navy,” the Navy’s commander said in an interview with *The West Block* host Mercedes Stephenson.



Vice-Admiral Topshee commander of the Canadian Navy, speaks at rededication of the National Naval Reserve Monument at HMCS Carleton in Ottawa, Oct. 2023.

Some of the areas we’re particularly short — (like) maritime technicians, who are people that we require to be able to sail the ships — they’re the ones that operate the plant, that make the engines run, make the ship have power and heat and everything else that needs to be able to operate at sea.”

The vice-admiral warned the Navy was in a “critical state” at the end of November when he released a video called “The State of the Royal Canadian Navy,” highlighting the fact that recruitment challenges being faced across the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) hinder operational readiness. In the video, he says their attrition rate for these maritime technicians is one exiting every two days.

“So, we have just enough to get by and we’re growing them as quickly as we can. But even if I recruited every person in Canada who is willing to join the Navy (it) would take us 5 to 10 years to train them all to the level that we require,” Topshee told Stephenson.

“Which is one of the reasons that we put the video out. The video internally was meant to be a call to action to really make it clear that we need to take a look at all of our human resources issues, how we manage our establishment, how we divide up our occupations and all the functions on the ship.”

Despite being short on crew, Topshee says that the Navy can maintain its operational commitments, including deploying three ships as part of the Indo-Pacific Strategy and Operation Reassurance, but there is little room for things to go wrong.

“There’s a number of different commitments we have to protect Canada and Canada’s maritime interests and I’m confident that we will continue to execute all those requirements. But there is a chance if things don’t go well, that we won’t be able to meet those,” Topshee said.

In a recent statement, Defence Minister Bill Blair’s spokesperson, Daniel Minden, said that the minister agrees with Topshee’s assessment that the CAF and Navy are facing challenges and echoes Topshee’s confidence in finding ways through this.

“We are making significant new investments in the Royal Canadian Navy to help it meet tomorrow’s challenges. We are investing in six new Arctic and Off-shore Patrol ships – four of which have already been delivered. As the Admiral outlined, these are significantly boosting our naval capabilities,” Minden wrote.

“We are also investing in two Joint Support Ships and a new fleet of 15 Canadian Surface Combatants built here in Canada. This will be the largest Canadian shipbuilding initiative since World War II.



This project is expected to create and maintain 10,000 jobs over 25 years – and provide the RCN with modern, state of the art ships built in Canada so that we can continue to meet our international commitments.”

Minden then pointed to an announcement Blair made last month in Halifax, concerning plans to build a \$188 million new naval training centre to complement shipbuilding commitments.

More programs have also been introduced in an attempt to help bolster ranks in the Navy. Permanent residents are now eligible to enrol in the CAF and in March the Navy Experience Program was launched. This program allows individuals to sign a one-year contract to try out a variety of naval trades before opting into a career path or deciding service is not for them.

While Topshee is confident in the Navy’s ability to meet the challenges ahead, more ships mean more staff are still needed.

“So, in terms of the delivery of the future fleet, a lot is happening next year,” he said. “The challenge is it takes time to get all of those ships into service and we need the sailors to operate them.”

Global News 31 December 2023



HMCS Montréal



Branch Events

Garden Party.....Thursday 16 May
Rosedale Golf Club

Fort York 165 Past Presidents

LCol Brian Samuel McCool, MBE

1901-1982

Brian McCool was elected President of Fort York 165 for Canada's Centennial year . . . 1967. Born in London, Ontario, he was an educator, administrator and music conductor. He earned a B.A. at the University of Toronto in 1923. He taught English, physical training, and classical languages in Toronto schools and was head of the music section at Harbord Collegiate, 1928 until 1939. Following distinguished military service in World War II, including his participation as principal landing officer at Dieppe, he was awarded the MBE.

The Ontario Department of Education appointed McCool assistant director of music in 1945 and he was vice-principal of its Summer Music School



1945-49 and principal 1956-70. He was a music professor 1948-49 at the Ontario College of Education and the music director 1959-68 for Ontario schools. Through the music branch of the Department of Education, he organized concerts 1947-60 in 75 Ontario towns, in which more than 300 young performing artists (including Jon Vickers and Lois Marshall) gave and received invaluable musical experience.

A man of prodigious energies, McCool engaged in many community activities. He was conductor 1945-48 of the Harmony Symphony Orchestra and assistant conductor of the Leslie Bell Singers. An ardent

Gilbert & Sullivan fan, he conducted over 100 productions of their works in the years 1932-70.

He was also Ontario chairman 1945-9 of the Citizen's Forum and, after retirement, secretary for both the provincial and federal Boundaries Commissions.

In 1974 he was awarded L'Ordre militaire et hospitalier de St-Lazare de Jérusalem. With Healey Willan he edited the 1951 edition of the *School and Community Song Book* (Toronto). In 1966 the Toronto Kiwanis Festival established the Brian S. McCool trophy to be awarded annually to the school accumulating the most points in choral, orchestral, and band classes.

McCool and Dieppe

McCool was captured during the Dieppe Raid. While being interrogated by a German officer after the raid, Major Brian McCool, the Principal Military Landing Officer, was asked about the true purpose for the raid: "This was too big for a raid and too small for an invasion. What were you trying to do?" In response, McCool replied, "If you could tell me.....I would be very grateful."

The Canadian Commando unit, named Viking Force, was based on the 2nd Division. Within a fortnight 267 volunteers from the division were training at Seaford in a muddy estuary of the Cuckmere River in Sussex. The Viking Force organization was based on a British Commando but built on a smaller scale. The headquarters section was led by a major and comprised 24 of all ranks. A further 36 officers and men staffed the



support squadron (i.e. intelligence, signals and medical sections). The remaining 130 personnel were divided into two troops each consisting of five officers

The Viking Force placed heavy emphasis on firepower. In addition to the standard .303 Lee Enfield rifle, each troop carried four Bren light machine guns and eight Thompson sub-machine guns, as well as two anti-tank rifles and a two inch mortar. Within days of the commencement of training instructors whittled the large group of volunteers down to its official strength of 190 all ranks. From 4 April 1942, personnel from the British Commandos joined the men of Viking Force to increase the intensity of the training and begin to turn them into hardened commandos. The commanding officer responsible for whipping the Canadian neophyte commandos into shape was Major Brian McCool of the Royal Regiment of Canada.

During the last half of April 1942, training intensified. It now included speed marches with weapons and 60 pound rucksacks, river crossings, leaping from crags into sand pits 15 feet below, cliff climbing and night



manoeuvres. During these training exercises if the men did not get back to the beaches in time to be ferried to the mother ship, Josephine Charlotte, they had to swim back to the ship with their full equipment!

As a result, Viking Force became swept up in the preparations for Operation Rutter (Dieppe Raid) and the intensive training that had been reserved for the elite of Viking Force was now extended to the entirety of 4 and 6 Brigades. Quite simply, Major McCool and his cadre became instructors for the others. In this regard, from the end of May to the beginning of July the Viking Force cadre became key to the efforts to help 4 and 6 Brigades master the rigours of amphibious warfare.

Following the disastrous raid, this notice appeared in

Fort York News February 2024

the Hamilton Spectator: Toronto, Sept. 18 - (CP) - "Three Toronto officers of the Royal Regiment of Canada, previously reported missing, or missing believed killed at Dieppe, were reported last night prisoners of war in Germany.

Major Brian McCool, reported missing, believed killed, was officially, said by the International Red Cross, a prisoner of war."



Above: Colonel McCool (pointing) training in the field with Viking Force, April 1942.



Fort



Viking Force Crest

York
News
February
2024



Dieppe Beach